COME HERE, YOU!
SAY CHEESE!

That wasn't the sound of my heart breaking
I did NOT fall for a guy I knew for only half a day.
.....

I'M SURE IT WAS HIS...
...SISTER, OR SOMETHING! IT'S ALWAYS A SISTER OR SOMETHING!
ARE YOU BRAINDEAD FROM ALL THAT SHOJO MANGA?!
DID YOU NOT SEE HER PLASTERED OVER HIM LIKE A WET TOWEL?!
.....MAYBE THEY'RE JUST REALLY CLOSE...?
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
NOT LIKE I EVER HAD A CHANCE, OR ANYTHING. NOT LIKE I SHOULD EVEN BE THINKING ABOUT HAVING A CHANCE.
:SIGH:
PM 1:14
!
...DAMN IT!!

SORRY!
SORRY!
COMING THROUGH!
S
N
?
?
E
?
W
V.I.P. LOUNGE
♥!

UM.
STAFF
I NEED TO... INSIDE...
VIP & GOH ONLY
...OH!
YEAH!
DIG
DIG
RUSTLE

NICE TRY.
CRUMPLE
THAT DIDN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE HER HANDWRITING.
TOSS
...!
SCRAM, MORTAL.
I'M SURE SHE PROMISED YOU A MILLION DOLLARS, TOO. ALL KINDSA SHIT HAPPENS IN DREAMS.
THAT LETTER WAS REAL! IT WAS FROM LIDA!
SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO SEE ME!

I...!!
...I WANTED TO SEE WHO?
.....!
JUST A FLAKY FANGIRL, MISS ZEFF.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
STAFF
Y-YOU SENT ME A LETTER! SAID YOU...
!
OH, ARE YOU CHRISTIE?
THE ONE WITH "WARY CITY"?
YEEEEES...
WHOO-HOO!!
PLEASE EXCUSE US.

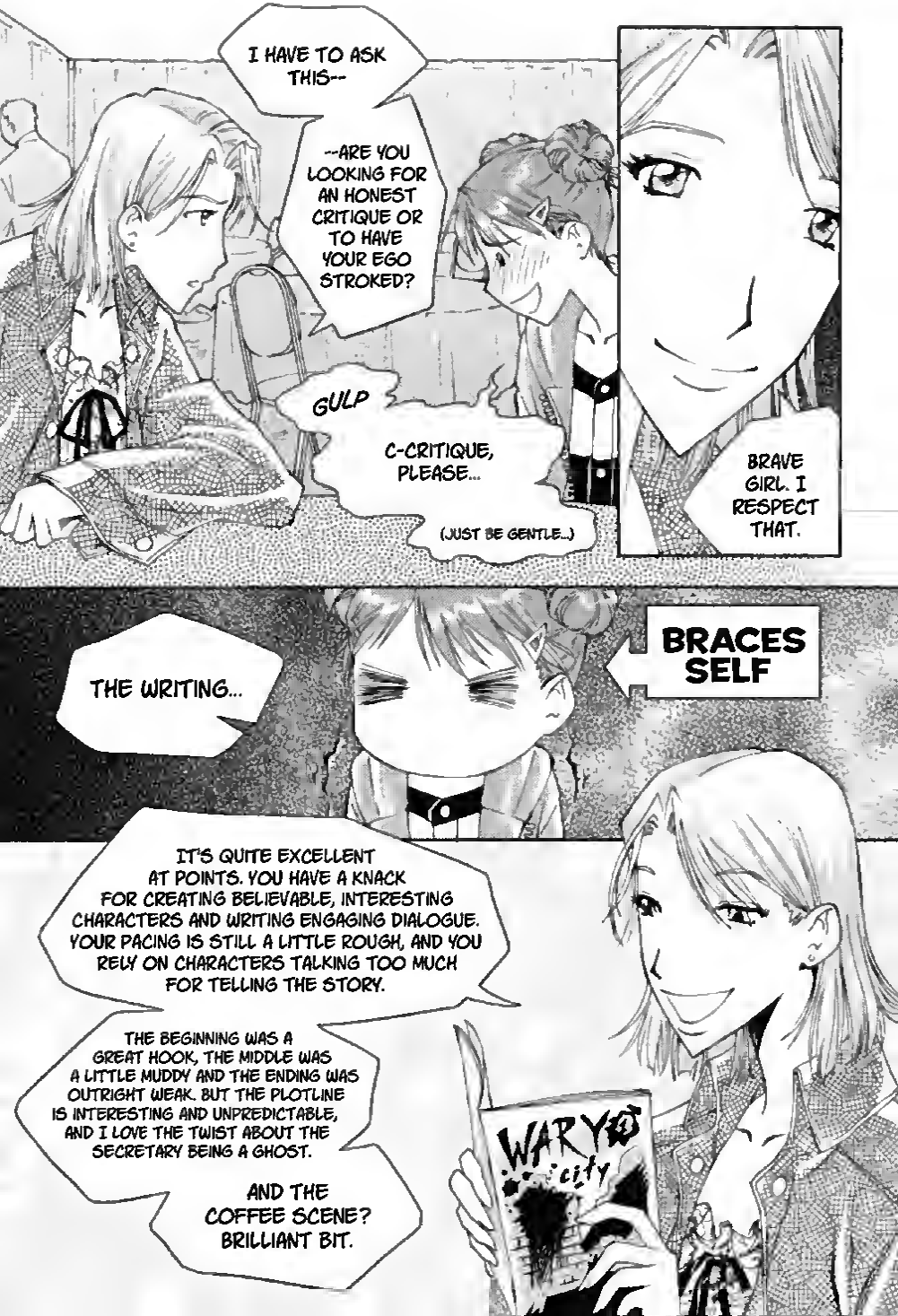
V.I.P. LOUNGE
ZOOM
?
STAFF
FOUND THE WRITER!!
EDITOR
BRING IT, YO.
OKAY, SETTLE THIS FOR US...
THE SECRETARY-- IS SHE A GHOST, OR A HUMAN WITH PARANORMAL POWERS?

THROWN FOR A LOOP
BLINK
EH?
EH?
...OR POSSIBLY TWO
BLINK
SH-SHE'S A GHOST.
HA!
YOU OWE ME DINNER!! TEACH YOU TO DOUBT A WRITER, NEENER NEENER NEEENER.
CRAP.
QUIT GLOATING, OR YOU'RE GETTING ONION RINGS FOR THAT DINNER.
=
R.I.P LIDA
.....I'LL BE GOOD.
THERE'S A LOVE.
SPEAKING OF FOOD, WANT TO JOIN US FOR SOME SANDWICHES?
...
SHE'S A STUCK-UP BITCH!
...DO I?!

...THE SCENE WITH THE COFFEE.
HEH HEH, YEAH, THAT ONE WAS AWESOME!
S-SO, ERR.
YOU DON'T THINK OUR COMIC SUCKS?
SUCKS? WHEN DID I SAY THAT?
OH, UM...DEREK SAID Y-YOU...
...DIDN'T LIKE IT VERY MUCH.
TH-THAT YOU SAID WE SHOULD GO BACK TO SCHOOL.
GULP!
DID HE, NOW?

HAVEN'T HAD ONE OF THOSE IN A WHILE, HUH.
YEAH, WELL, AT LEAST HE'S NOT CLAIMING I THREW HIS ART INTO THE TRASH.
GOD, I REMEMBER THAT ONE! DID SHE EVER TAKE THAT BACK?
NOPE.
TAP
ALL I SAID TO YOUR ARTIST WAS THAT THE ART WAS STILL ROUGH AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENT. I ALSO SUGGESTED HE TAKE SOME LIFE-DRAWING LESSONS BECAUSE, WELL...
...HE NEEDS THEM.
OH. I-I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS VERY GOOD.
HE IS, ACTUALLY. A HEAD ABOVE THE REST.
VERY PROMISING WORK, AND I TOLD HIM AS MUCH.

BUT HE'S NOWHERE NEAR PROFESSIONAL LEVEL.
TO BE FRANK, HE'S STILL GOT A LOOOONG WAY TO GO. HIS ANATOMY IS OUT TO LUNCH, PERSPECTIVE BARELY EXISTENT. HE'S GOT GOOD INSTINCTS FOR STRIKING COMPOSITION, AND IT LETS HIM GET AWAY WITH LACK OF STRUCTURAL KNOWLEDGE, MAKING IT SEEM LESS OBVIOUS.
FLIP
FLIP
BUT IT'S STILL THERE, AND IT LIMITS HIM SEVERELY.
MY OPINION-- HE NEEDS ART SCHOOL.
I SEE. UM...
W-WHAT ABOUT MY WRITING?
.....


I HAVE TO ASK THIS--
--ARE YOU LOOKING FOR AN HONEST CRITIQUE OR TO HAVE YOUR EGO STROKED?
GULP
C-CRITIQUE, PLEASE...
(JUST BE GENTLE...)
BRAVE GIRL. I RESPECT THAT.
BRACES SELF
THE WRITING...
IT'S QUITE EXCELLENT AT POINTS. YOU HAVE A KNACK FOR CREATING BELIEVABLE, INTERESTING CHARACTERS AND WRITING ENGAGING DIALOGUE. YOUR PACING IS STILL A LITTLE ROUGH, AND YOU RELY ON CHARACTERS TALKING TOO MUCH FOR TELLING THE STORY.
THE BEGINNING WAS A GREAT HOOK, THE MIDDLE WAS A LITTLE MUDDY AND THE ENDING WAS OUTRIGHT WEAK. BUT THE PLOTLINE IS INTERESTING AND UNPREDICTABLE, AND I LOVE THE TWIST ABOUT THE SECRETARY BEING A GHOST.
AND THE COFFEE SCENE? BRILLIANT BIT.
WARYO city

?
...MORE...COFFEE... SCENES...
SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE
YOU'RE... WRITING IT DOWN?
DON'T WANT TO FORGET. WHAT ELSE?
. . . . !
I LOVE YOU!!!
LUNGE
EXCUSE ME WHILE I BASK IN THIS FOR A MOMENT...
HEH.

UGH.
It's Derek.
SO NOT PICKING UP.
UM, I HAVE TO GO.
SHOVE
OH, HEY--WAIT!
SIGN THIS FOR ME?
YOU'VE GOT PROMISE, GIRL. LET ME CLAIM I KNEW YOU BACK WHEN!
THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH FOR EVERYTHING.
. . . . . .
!!
THUD

...ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?!
STAFF
VIP & GOH ONLY
YEAH, YEAH, I'M FINE!
SORRY ABOUT BACK THERE!
AND TH- THANK YOU, AGAIN.
BYEEE! GOOD LUCK WITH EVERYTHING!
BYE, THANKS!
WELL, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, YOU HEAR?

.....
STAFF
STAFF
HAVE A NICE DAY.
...
...YOU, TOO.
.....Wow.
WOOOOW.
.....Like...

OHMYGOD OHMYGODOHMY GAAAAWWD!!!
FITTING RIGHT IN NOW
HELLO?
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!
TWO TABLES AWAY. DON'T THROW A FIT.

BEEP
It's strange...
How just one day can put...
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?
THIS PLACE IS HUGE. I GOT LOST.
WELL, I'M GOING TO THE PANEL NOW.
HMPF.
...an entirely different perspective on someone.
FINE. HAVE FUN.
I feel like...
...I don't even know him anymore.

The rest of the day was a haze.
SHIVER
A pleasant haze, mostly...
...which even my asshole of a boyfriend couldn't damper.
Mental note--lines to the Masquerade are endless.

...But SOOO worth it.
WOW! LET'S GIVE THEM A HAND, FOLKS!
CLAP
CLAP
NEXT ENTRANT— SEXY JOE!
BISHi 4EVAR
AND FOR MY NUMBER... I SHALL DROP MY PANTS!
...HE DIDN'T.
YES HE DID, YES HE DID!
WHOO, TAKE IT ALL OFF!
HEH, SOMEONE'S GETTING BANNED FROM THIS CON
APPLAUSE!
EEK!
SECURITY!!!
WOOO!!
...A SITUATION, REPEAT, WE HAVE A SITUATION.
STAFF
STAFF
SHTA
SHTA
This place kinda grows on you.
HEE.

And finally... something I was actually looking forward to.
The J-Pop dance!
Fortunately for him, I'm having too much fun to stay angry.

...I take that BACK.
Whatever. I don't even care anymore.
.....
Everyone's off in their own little circles.
!
GRETA!

HI AGAIN! MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
TAP
OH! HEY, YOU! NOT AT ALL. JUMP ON IN!
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO SANDRA, THE PERSON WHO MADE YOUR HAT.
HIYA!
THIS IS CHRISTIE, OUR NEIGHBOR FROM THE ARTIST ALLEY.
IT'S THAT GIRL! FROM THE BOOTH!
SANS THE WIG...
AND SHE STILL LOOKS LIKE SHE STEPPED OFF A POSTER!
DROP-DEAD GORGEOUS
NO BOOBS
NO ASS
NO COMPETITION

I SAID, WERE YOU LOOKING FOR MATT?
WH-WHAT?
...FOR MATT?
N-NO, OF COURSE NOT!
OH, OKAY.
...IS HE HERE?
SHUT UP
SHUT UP
SHUT UP...
WHAT DID I TELL YOU?
YEP! HE'S BUSY PROPPING UP A WALL OVER THAT A WAY.
GO TELL HIM TO STOP SULKING.

YOU WERE RIGHT.
CRUSH THE SIZE OF TEXAS, THERE.
It's GOT to be illegal somewhere to be that hot!

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.
LIKE-WISE.
YOU DANCING?
HELL, NO.
OH.
.....ARE YOU HERE FOR THE MUSIC, THEN?
OR THE SIGHTS?
NEITHER, NOT SORRY TO DISAPPOINT. MY SISTER LOVES THESE THINGS. SHE MAKES ME TAG ALONG.
SHE IS HIS SISTER!!
HA!
GLOATING IS A SIN, YOU KNOW.
SH-SHE MAKES YOU GO? CAN'T YOU JUST SAY NO?
STOP FEELING RELIEVED, YOU IDIOT!!
TRY SAYING NO TO HER SOME-TIME. YOU'LL BE IN THERAPY FOR YEARS.
BLARE

OH GOD, I GUESS *THIS* ONE'S POPULAR!
WHAT?! I CAN'T HEAR YOU!!
LEAN
BUMP
SORRY, STILL CAN'T...
HEY...!
OOF.

The music...
It's suddenly...
...not that loud.

DAYLODGE
...THEY'RE NOT BACK YET?!
IT'S SO LATE ALREADY!
Read me!
THEY LEFT A NOTE.
"AT A PARTY— MET UP WITH SOME FRIENDS, BE BACK LATE
DON'T DO ANYTHING WE WON'T DO! ;)"
AWKWARD SILENCE
HEY, THEY FORGOT THEIR BOOZE.

WANT SOME?
WE'RE MINORS, DEREK.
RUSTLE
SO, NO THANKS.
SOME-THING ELSE FUN, THEN?
...UH...UM... A-ACTUALLY, I WAS GOING TO TAKE A SHOWER.
SLAM

What is this?
Hiding in the bathroom from my own boyfriend... Hoping the roommates come back soon so that I don't have to be alone with him...
SQUEEEK
I can barely stand him touching me.

Touching...
!
.....
Well. I guess it's as simple as that.
I don't love him anymore.

:SIGH:
.....Wait.
Did I ever?
Or did I just...
...go with him because he was the first boy to ever ask me?

PEEK
NNNN, DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THEY'RE BACK YET...
!!
WELL WELL WEEELL, LOOK WHO'S FINALLY ALL SQUEAKY-CLEAN.

HOW MANY DID YOU HAVE?!
I DUNNO... HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE DAMN SHOWER? YOU EVEN LOCKED THE DOOR.
I KNEW IT.
YOU TRIED TO JUMP IN, DIDN'T YOU?
.....
...I JUST WANTED TO PEE.
SIGH
. . . . . .
DEREK... I WANT TO BREAK UP.

OH YEAH?
YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO JUST ELOPE WITH HIM AND SAVE YOURSELF THE TROUBLE?
WHAT?
DON'T PLAY DUMB! I SAW YOU.
S-SAW ME?
KISSING THAT FREAK IN SHADES AND TRENCHCOAT!!!
GUESS I CAN'T TRUST YOU AFTER ALL, CAN I?

I'M NOT SORRY.
WHAT WAS THAT?
YOU HEARD ME.
I AM NOT... SORRY.
YOU FLIRT WITH GIRLS LEFT AND RIGHT, EVEN THOUGH YOU KNOW I HATE IT!
I DIDN'T MAKE OUT WITH ANY OF THEM!

I'M SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR GIRL, SOMEONE YOU'RE IN *LOVE* WITH!!
IT STILL *HURTS*, YOU UNBELIEVABLE ASS!!
BUT ALONG COMES SOME BIG-CHESTED SKANK IN A BUNNY SUIT AND ALL YOUR ATTENTION GOES DOWN HER BRA!!
HEY, IF SHE'S SHOWING--I'M FREE TO LOOK!!
WOULD IT HAVE *KILLED* YOU TO BE MORE ATTENTIVE TO *ME* THIS WEEKEND?
IT'S MY FIRST CON! I WAS SCARED!
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING!
...AND YOU JUST THREW ME IN AND DIDN'T EVEN STOP TO CHECK IF I CAN SWIM OR NOT!
GRRR

YOU WANT ATTENTION?
FINE.

DEREK, NO, WAIT...
NO! I DON'T WA--MMPF!
He's too strong.
DEREK, STOP IT!

NO.
11:15

KICK

3RD FLOOR
306
CLICK
305
...THE ICE MACHINE. IS IT ONE FLOOR UP OR DOWN?